

The Woman's Page of The Times-Dispatch

A Woman's Chief Virtue to Which Others Are but Dross

All virtues which may adorn a woman's character are but as dross, if self-control be not counted among them.

A woman needs to be taught self-control from the hour of her birth. She needs to practice it until the hour of her death. From the uprising of the sun until its going down, each day and every day, the lesson should begin over and over again. It is only perfected when the full sum of days is told off, and the lesson of life on earth is finished for the individual woman.

Self-control defines a woman's position and her relation to her environment and the world around and about her. It steadies her purpose, strengthens her poise and endows her with a serenity that commands respect. The clarity of vision which it engenders makes for a dispassionate attitude toward whatever comes up for a decision that is pretty sure to place her on the right side and in the right place.

A woman trained from her cradle up to habits of self-control in speech will have so much less in the way of hasty words and impulsive utterance of opinion to regret. What she does say will have a weight and an influence that is only attributed to well thought-out and unbiased speech.

Guides and Direct Action.
Not only does self-control save a woman from inconsiderate speech, but it guides and directs her toward wise action in crises which arise to confront all women. A woman in control of her emotional nature does not permit herself to be hurried into the rash doing of anything which may prove injurious and entail disagreeable consequences. She is usually able to meet any emergency and to fulfill the responsibilities which it demands.

It is harder to be self-controlled than to be not self-controlled. It is more difficult for a woman to subdue her wayward tendencies and order her nature aright, than it is for her to indulge her erratic desires, and let them run to waste in all directions. Her sentimentalism is very pretty within certain limits, but it is anything but pretty when it breaks outside of those limits. Her sensitiveness and delicacy and modesty are admirable qualities, but they may be over-cultivated to the inconvenience and discomfort of ordinary, commonplace people, on whom the every day work of the world falls.

Self-Control Needed in Home.
There is no place where the exercise of self-control is more needed than in the home. In the administration of household affairs, in the management of children and servants, in encountering and overcoming the thousand and one difficulties, practical and otherwise, that center in the solving of social and economic questions a woman needs a clear head and a temperate judgment, in order that she may maintain her dignity and diffuse around her an atmosphere conducive to comfort and happiness.

The business world is a place which calls for the highest and most constant exercise of self-control on the part of women. Here women come often in contact with new and unfamiliar conditions. Their work is the only thing which calls, and it must have a marketable value. They are subject to the discipline of long and regular hours and to the rules governing these hours. Only a resolute exercise of will power as an agent of control can take women through the exactions of business and office life with undiminished cheerfulness and willingness of spirit.

In the World of Opportunity.
More and more women are breaking away from conventional restraints and adventuring into the outside field of opportunity and endeavor. Unless they have been trained to habits of self-control, they speedily come to grief in competition with others who are not handicapped at every turn by unrestrained emotionality.

Wherever and however a woman may be placed, the main factor of her education should be that training which develops her power of self-control, which keeps her nervous force in subjection to sound common sense and practicality. Color her life forth into the meeting ground where effort struggles into form and shape, will be something like the agonizing process of "breaking a butterfly on a wheel."

LAFACIO HEARN'S IDEA OF PATTS' SINGING
Lafacio Hearn, an author whom all women ought to know, said: "For me words have color, form, character. They have paces, ports, manners, eccentricities, they have moods, humors, sensations—they have tints, tones, personalities."

As an instance of what Lafacio Hearn means by his use of words, his description of Adeline Patti's singing is most felicitous. He describes it thus: "There was a great, dim pressure, a stifling heat, a whispering of silks, a weight of toilet perfumes. Then came an awful hush! all the silks stopped whispering. And there suddenly sweetened out through that dead, hot air, a clear, cool, close throat-gust of melody unlike any sound I ever heard before, save—in tropical nights—from the throat of a mockingbird. It was 'Auld Lang Syne' only—but with never a tremolo or artifice—a marvelous, audacious simplicity of utterance."

Women in Richmond and Virginia remember hearing Patti in the heyday of her fame, and again when she paid her farewell visit to the United States in the '90's, and can estimate the value of what Hearn says concerning it. They will be certain of one thing, and that is, that Mr. Hearn's powers of description render the person of whom he expresses his opinion, as fortunate in a way as Achilles, envied for his Homer by Alexander the Great.

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Apotheosis of the Mother

Motherhood is the topic of a thousand pens to-day. It is the day of the apotheosis of the mother. Yet many a mother, as she reads the glowing lines which celebrate the deep, absolute relation between mother and child, sighs to herself, knowing that in her own case this dream has faded with the years. "She remembers with longing the day 'when the children were little.' Then she was really their sun and star and refuge and hope and everything else in their little lives. Then she understood. Now she does not not. Her girls in the awkward age, her boys preparing for college, are mysteries to her. Their favorite teacher, their intimate friend, no matter how lily or foolishly chosen, can do more with them than she can. Where is the sublime power of motherhood, after all?"

Sometimes it is even worse. An actual antagonism grows up between mother and daughter in the home where they must spend their days together. It is this very lack of understanding—as many mothers know, though they do not openly acknowledge it—that sends many a girl into outside occupations. She is not happy at home, where she and her mother are continually at cross-purposes. Yet the mother may be passionately attached to the child, even in this case, and the antagonism be only a reflex of a continually thwarted and wounded love.

The root of the problem is twofold. First, as all biologists know, inheritance is so complex a thing that a child may have traits profoundly antagonistic to those of the mother. In early childhood, before personality is fully developed, these traits may not disturb the mother, whose authority overrides the child. But in the teens the clash comes. And to this is allied the other trouble—that many mothers, in their ignorance about children and their need of anxious care for the little ones, make the maternal reaction more and more a physical and material one.

CUTTING THE GARMENT ACCORDING TO THE CLOTH

One of the things all practical and busy women need to learn is to "cut the garment according to the cloth," or in other words, to regulate outcome by income, and so keep the balance adjusted.

The temptation to go outside the limits of prudence and to yield somewhat to natural desires in the line of expenditure is very present with women. Every woman likes to have a pretty, daintily furnished table, and to have it appetizingly spread. In these days of high prices the difficulties assailing women are specially great, and more than ever do they need to bring all their knowledge and ingenuity into play, if they would do themselves credit and satisfy the desires of others dependent upon them.

If the balance be rightly preserved and "buckle and tongue" made to meet the happiness and temper of the household and the woman who rules it can be depended on. The household realizes its restrictions and submits to them and, because they concern matters of necessity and not of choice, the submission is seasoned with cheerfulness. The woman who creates the reality, having accomplished her purpose, feels that her accountability has been well discharged, and is correspondingly thankful and self-congratulatory.

If the garment that should be cut with much placing of patterns and an eye to the utilization of every thread of the cloth, be fashioned recklessly, there will be failure on the part of the fashioner indeed. The garment will be too short even for twentieth century styles and too scant even for a day when scantiness seems the vogue. The garment-maker will have to bear the reproaches of those to whom her lack of foresight is altogether apparent and her sense of dissatisfaction over her failure to properly apprehend her work and its performance.

The crying evil of American social

life is its senseless extravagance. There is no thought of hedging in ambitions by the amount in hand for the carrying forward of those ambitions. The one idea is to gratify every whim, every desire, every inclination for luxury, regardless of cost, reckless of responsibility.

It remains for the women of America to stem the tide of this senseless folly, to restore matters to their rightful status and to bring back sanity into the home by regulating all expenses in proportion to the money that may be expended and that can be safely set aside for the purpose.

Appetizing Recipes.
Apples a la Cherbourg.—Pare the apples and cut them into squares. To every pound of apples put one pound of sugar, the rind of two lemons, and a little ginger. Cover them closely for several hours and then place them in a preserving pan, being careful not to break the apples, and add half a cupful of cider. Let them boil about twenty minutes, and then remove them one by one to a dish. When cold place them in a pile and put the lemon peel on top and pour the syrup around. Serve with cream.

Mock Cherry Pie.—Measure two cupfuls of cranberries, then cut in half and soak for half an hour in cold water to remove the seeds. Mix one tablespoonful of cornstarch with a little cold water, then stir it into one cupful of boiling water. When thick, remove from the fire and add one tablespoonful of butter, a pinch of salt, the cranberries, and one cupful of seeded raisins, one cupful of sugar, two tablespoonsful of vanilla. Pour into a pas-

try-lined tin, place the crust over the top and bake.

"Pigs in Blankets"—Drain large oysters and dip them in a dressing made of lemon juice, a dash of salt, and a little pepper. Fold around each oyster a very thin strip of bacon, fasten it with a thin toothpick, and saute in a very little butter until the bacon is crisp. Lay on triangles of toast and serve.

Poor Me.
Poor Me! I have done the best I could.
Or think I have done the best—
Which means, that my will to do was good.
But the deed scarce stands the test,
As only too clearly I now can see—
Poor Me!

Poor Me! I have gone about, about,
And run in a little round,
I thought I moved in the world without,
And I laughed at bar and bound;
I boasted of freedom—who never was free—
Poor Me!

There were some (I know) who loved me well
(Oh, they loved where I least deserved!)
There were some who hated, and would not tell
Wherefore their wrath I served!
Among themselves could neither agree—
Poor Me!

Poor Me! And, always, I fondly deemed,
Just one, at the end, would show what I'd dreamed.
And, after—my part might plead—
But now I know this never will be—
Poor Me!

—Edith M. Thomas.

Death Provides for All

There is almost always a little sinking of faith when we stand face to face with death and see the life itself, the personality, escape. We have no sense wherewith to trace that which is gone. Something, the totality, the vital principle, seems extinct, and we were more than mortal if we did not lose heart.

Then a woman must muster her courage, arrange her thoughts, and ask herself honestly if this be all. Can she believe for a moment that consciousness is no more than an unfortunate accident in a chaotic and material universe?

So far as we know there is constant transformation in the world, but no sheer loss. Also we know that the life principle is no visible, material part of the body. Dissectors cut up all kinds of bodies, living and dead, but never has one found the life principle itself. Thought may be concurrent with the action of the blood upon the brain cells, but no one has ever proved that the blood so acting caused thought. Finally, the chief virtue of which we have need in this life of close horizons and small vision is the trust that is born of courage.

So when we look on death, it is the moment to believe most fervently in life. Our capacities are blunt and meagre, and to despair lest the universe shall not contain more than we can see and grasp is as foolish as to build up sheer fancy pictures of possible forms of futurity. To live wisely we must have the courage of life, and that can only coexist with faith in life's significance.

"What," asks Whitman, "did you think life was so well provided for—and death, the purport of all life, is not well provided for?"

"I do not doubt that whatever can possibly happen anywhere, at any time, is provided for, in the inferences of things."

"I do not think life provides for all and for time and space—but I believe heavenly death provides for all."—Exchange.

The Capitol Square and What It Needs

An act of the Virginia Assembly passed in 1779 removed the seat of the State government from Williamsburg to Richmond and located the Capitol, Halls of Justice, State House and Executive Mansion. The corner-stone of the Capitol was laid August 13, 1785, and the Assembly convened in it for the first time during the session beginning October 19, 1785, though the building was then unfinished.

Progress was more leisurely in the eighteenth than in the nineteenth century. Some years intervened before the Capitol Square was regularly laid off and terraced by a Frenchman, Monsieur Gouffroy. Later the terraces were removed, and Mr. Notman, of Philadelphia, undertook the improvement in the west side of the square, which hardly corresponds with that of the east, the ideas of the two landscape artists being evidently different.

Finally, however, the work of improvement on the square was considered finished, and the Virginia Assembly, in 1818, ordered the iron fence now inclosing it to be erected. Band concerts several times a week rendered it in ante-bellum days an attractive gathering place in summer evenings for the young girls and men of the city, and flowerbeds and flowering shrubs and trees supplied vivacious touches of color against the green of turf and foliage.

The changes wrought by the War Between the States have deprived Richmond people largely of the pleasure of using the square as a place of delightful resort. But that seems no reason why, as the years have passed on, that the work of ornamentation on grounds surrounding one of the most historic buildings in the city or State, should have been entirely discontinued.

Flowers Have Been Banished.
The flowers, formerly luxuriant and well tended, no longer lend beauty and fragrance to grounds that are now bare without them. Many of the trees have been cut down, and others, needing care and attention, are left to slow decay for lack of it. A movement began with the last meeting of the General Assembly regarding the trees, which has been followed by no tangible results.

These trees are a valuable asset of the State. The avenue of elm forming the approach to the Executive Mansion, is something that every Virginian should be proud enough of to protect and preserve to its utmost limits. What is true of the elms is true of all the others. A tree is a friend and should be cared for as such. Trees do not attain their full growth in the life of a generation, but attention will keep them vigorous for an unlimited number of years, and intelligent attention and treatment is what is badly needed just now in the square, not indiscriminate lopping and hewing, leaving tree wounds that invite injury through exposure.

Old and New Richmond.
The Richmond of to-day is constantly contrasted with the Richmond of yesterday, the former being exploited as a growing city, and the latter as a straggling village. If it be true that Richmond is a city, it would seem that the strictly utilitarian period had been outgrown, and that in the matter of a first-established and most important public park, surrounding the State House, the question of ornamentation might be taken into account, instead of being dropped out of it. Progress and does not mean retrogression, such as has set in with the Capitol Square.

Scientific principles in forestry have been left out of account in the setting out of young trees to replace others which have fallen or been cut down in the square. It is well known that trees well advanced can be transplanted to advantage when the transplanting is properly done. In spite of progressiveness, however, the young trees which appear here and there in the vacant spaces of the square are such mere saplings that years must elapse before they can come into practical use.

Fireless Candy Making.
The requisites for this work are the best quality of pulverized sugar, white blotting paper, a short, dull knife with a good deal of spring to it, one or more shallow saucers, a small tumbler of water, flavoring, extracts, colorings (such as confectioners' use), and nutmegs, dates, figs and such fresh fruits as lemons, tangerines, oranges, pineapples, or almost any fruit in season.

In the way of flavorings, peppermint, wintergreen, vanilla, essence of cinnamon, ginger, cinnamon and coriander and caraway seeds are popular favorites. Where the fresh juices of the fruit are used, the water will not be found necessary.

In a saucer put a small quantity of sugar and moisten carefully with water or fruit juice, stirring in drop by drop, until the mixture is of such consistency as to drop easily from the point of the knife into such shapes as one may desire on the white blotting paper, which is also to be moistened.

Nut-meats, candied or preserved cherries, are pressed in or laid on top of the mixture, while still moist. Chopped nuts or grated cocoanut may be mixed with the sugar and used as a filling for pitted dates or figs.

Distributing Christmas Gifts.
Last year we bought a large, flat basket, draped it with white cheese cloth, and trimmed it with holly, and the children and our Christmas packages for the family.

We went into the room one at a time and deposited our gifts, and when the pile was completed, spread a large sheet of holly crepe paper on top.

We sat around the dining room table with the baskets in the center, and the youngest member of the family took the gifts from the basket. Only one package was presented at a time, and the recipient opened it and all saw and admired it before passing on to the next.

We had original verses and apt quotations written on many of the bundles, which the distributor read aloud, and all enjoyed the fun.

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